

JANUARY 2025

GRACE NOTES

No. 1 pekingrace.org



highlights

January 2025

PASTOR'S CORNER

Page 2-3

CHILDREN'S MINISTRY

Page 4

YOUTH MINISTRY

Page 5-8

CANTATA

Page 9

CHURCH NEWS

Page 10-11

BIRTHDAYS

Page 12

PRAYER CONCERNS

Page 13



*When Jesus spoke again to the people,
he said, "I am the light of the world.
Whoever follows me will never walk in
darkness, but will have the light of life.*

John 8:12

PASTOR'S CORNER

Thoughts, dreams, and ramblings of someone who just wants to connect you to Jesus



Romans 12:2 is a fitting verse for the start of any year. It tells us, “Do not conform to the pattern of this world but be transformed by the renewing of your mind”. For many of us, there is a desire to make some solid life changes in the start of any new year. To quote an older Counting Crows song (A Long December) we hope that; “maybe this year will be better than the last”. There is a legacy of renewal that comes to us each January and for some of us that renewal reflects the renewal of the days. They appear to be getting longer and the light continues to expand, almost recharging our tired souls. Others can articulate some shortcomings within their lives and the changing of a calendar gives permission for the new day.

Though all of this is good, the scripture in Romans presents to us a bit of a “both and” situation. You see, there is indeed a call for all of us as Christians to renewal. If you look at the essence of the message of Jesus, it is that on the other side of death is life. When we profess our sins and offer them to Jesus, we cannot only find forgiveness from those sins but there is a loosening of the power that they have over our lives. As the power of those sins is diminished upon us, we can then make choices for how we want to live our lives in the future. The call of a new year is to make choices to become a new “you” in that better life. John 10:10 tells us that we are to “have life more abundantly” and throughout the scriptures, we are compelled to future.

But there are two more sections to this Roman scripture. The first one places us at odds with the use of New Year's and the renewal that many of us are looking for. The scripture warns us to not “conform” to the world. New Year's resolutions could be a form of our “conforming”. It appears to be a bit of a trap laid out for us. But don't get too caught up on the surface. In this space, I would argue, that our conforming is the way we treat our resolutions. Many like the idea of the change they hope for but do not implement the real practices that will lead to real change. The journey of discipleship in faith is a model for us to find that real change. Conforming to the world would be for us to not take serious the change or to not believe it possible. In faith, we have learned that all things are possible through the God who has saved and redeemed us. If we can hold fast to this knowledge, then we might just live these goals as if they had real meaning for us.

The scripture also speaks to our minds. For many people, we worry about our spirit with our faith and the mind is something we work on in other domains. This is not what we are called to. The transformation is through the mind in this verse. That does not mean that your goals that relate to your body are not important, but hear me out, our minds are how we interpret much of this world. The mind is where what we touch, taste, see, smell, etc... are later understood. Our minds allow us to explore what is and what has yet to be. Transforming our minds is an investment in that new future. Any goals that you might set for yourself this New Year's need to include intentional work on the health of your mind.

There is a New Year before us. We all have one life, and we can choose how we want to live it. We can conform to the world and live as if no change could happen, or we can also live as if life itself was breaking forth in our midst. I pray that we can all choose to live to see that life.

Eiri Swanson



UNITEKIDS SANTA BREAKFAST

Emmy Thies & Dianna Miller
Co-Directors of Children & Family Ministry



The children did a wonderful job performing songs at Santa's Prayer Breakfast. For the third year in a row, they performed their favorite song, Best Gift Ever, about how Jesus is the BEST gift they will ever receive!

UNITEkids & Bible Buddies resume the week of Jan 6th

Questions about Children's Ministry or ready to volunteer? Contact Emmy Thies at ethies@pekingrace.org

Jensen England sang a solo of Oh Come All Ye Faithful. He enjoyed it so much that he was inspired to sing again at worship at Pekin First during the 3rd week of Advent.

The kids have grown in their faith and their relationships with God all throughout 2024!





UNITEyouth January Updates

Important Dates

- **1/3-1/5 WinterXtreme**
 - Leaving Grace at 3pm
- **1/5 No youth Group**
- **1/12 Youth Group Resumes**
 - Junior High 5pm-6:30pm
 - Senior High 6:30pm-8pm
- **1/30 Nelson's Chicken Dinner
Fundraiser at Grace**
 - Youth need to be at Grace by 3:45pm

Thank you, Pastor Sean and Sandra for an evening of worship and talking about brokenness and beauty. The youth had an **amazing time** and enjoyed using a hammer to break plates!



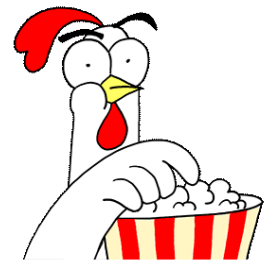


BIG ANNOUNCEMENT!!!!!!

Calling all available youth to help on January 30th at Nelson's Chicken Dinner Fundraiser. Youth need to be at Grace by 3:45 p.m. The event is 4-5:30 p.m. Tickets are \$12 each and are being sold at both churches!

The dinner works like a drive through. A person buys the ticket/tickets, shows up at Grace (601 N. 4th Street) for dinner pickup between 4-5:30 p.m. The participant will stay in their vehicle and will hand the ticket/tickets to the youth who will go inside the church to grab the to-go containers.

Do not park in the parking spaces unless you're wanting to come inside. The youth will be going to the cars that are in the line to deliver the food. Please let Jill, Meghan, or Brionna know if you have any questions or concerns. Thank you!



Grace UMC Radical Youth Fundraiser for the Mission Trip

Meal includes: Half a Chicken, Mashed potatoes & gravy, green beans & roll. Utensils are provided.

Pick-up at Grace UMC on January 30 from 4-5:30 p.m. Call the church office at 309-347-7131, or email secretary@pekingrace.org, to order tickets.



Uniteyouth

would like to say

"THANK YOU" !

THE LADIES CHRISTMAS DINNER WAS A WONDERFUL WAY TO KICK OFF THE HOLIDAY SEASON! FAMILY, FRIENDS, FOOD & FELLOWSHIP WAS "IN THE AIR" TO CELEBRATE JESUS.



YOUTH SUNDAY

Youth Sunday

Grace UMC had Youth Sunday on December 22 at the 9:00 a.m. service. At this service, the youth helped by lighting the advent candles, taking the offering, leading prayer, and being present at the service.

Also, at this service three of our youths were baptized. UNITEyouth was able to give two of the young people their first Bibles. It really was an amazing day. Please be in prayer for these young people, their leaders, and for this program as Grace continues to love and nurture these youths.

We are blessed that these young people were first guided in their Christian Faith by Emmy and now they are growing even further in their faith through the UNITEyouth program.



CANTATA

Church News



Thank you to the Sanctuary Choir and the orchestra for the beautiful worship that was lifted up to God. It was wonderful and moving. God's presence could be felt in your worship. The Christmas Cantata, *This is Christmas, Celebrating the Heart of Christmas* was shared with the congregation on December 15. If you happened to miss it you may find the Cantata at our YouTube site or on the Grace App. Look for December 15, the 11:00 a.m. service.



BAPTISMS & NEW MEMBERS

Church News



Blythe

And Peter said to them, “Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.”
Acts 2:38



Mallory

Grace Church has been blessed to have four amazing young women make a personal choice to be baptized. These young women were so excited to become a part of Grace.

Continue to lift them up in prayer and support them as they learn and grow in their faith.



Daphnie



Maegen



Grace also recently welcomed two new members to our congregation. At the Purpose service we welcomed

Sean and Analeese Poindexter.

We welcome you to Grace and pray that you will grow strong in your faith. We also pray that they will be able to find ways to serve and further God's kingdom in Pekin.

Book Club

Book Club will meet on Tuesday, January 14th at 10:00 a.m. in the library at Pekin Estates. They always meet on the second Tuesday and always meet at 10:00 a.m. They will be discussing Something Worth Doing by Jane Kirkpatrick. New members are always welcome. If you have any questions, please call Sandy Isenburg 309-241-1411.

Giving Envelopes Available

Please pick up your 2025 privacy giving envelopes located on the countertop in the hospitality area. If you aren't available to pick yours up, please contact the office and we will mail your envelopes.

Note: Some envelope numbers change from year to year. Because of this, **please do not use leftover giving envelopes from previous years as your number may be different in 2025.**

If you currently do not have envelopes and would like some, please let Nanette in the office know.

An option available is to give a monthly offering through ACH giving. Please go to, <https://pekingrace.com/wp-content/uploads/2022/12/Finacial-Form.pdf>, print the form, fill out the information, and submit to the office. We also have forms in the office.

Another option is giving through our Pekin Grace app. You can set up your giving to be automatic or a one-time gift.

Thanks for your generous donations which allow Grace Church to manage everyday operations, in addition to reaching out to others through our mission work.

Commitment Cards

Commitment Cards were sent out. Please remember to turn in your commitment card as soon as you can. We use these cards to make plans for next year's activities. We asked that they be returned on December 30. Extra cards may be found in the office.

Office Closed

The church office will be closed January 1 and 2. Call the office and leave a message if you need something as the messages will be monitored. January Grace Notes will be published late due to the holiday.

Men's Tuesday Group

All men are welcome to join this group, which meets every Tuesday from 8 - 9 a.m. Come for God's life lessons, laughs, and little-known facts served up with coffee & donuts. This group offers fellowship for men who want to share their Christian life stories.

THERE WILL BE NO TUESDAY MEN'S GROUP MEETING UNTIL TUESDAY JANUARY 7th.

Thanks.

Nelson Chicken Dinner

Fundraiser for the Grace UMC UNITEyouth and Alpha Delta Kappa.

Meal includes: Half port-a-pit chicken, mashed potatoes, gravy, green beans & roll. Utensils will be provided. Dinners are to be picked up at Grace UMC Parking Lot, 601 N. 4th Street as drive-thru carry out. Orders need to be received by January 19th in order to be included.

Contact: Jill, Brionna or the church office for tickets. Tickets must be paid in advance of pick-up. Thank you!

Christmas Eve Offering

A total of \$2,543 was given for the Christmas Fund. This amount was divided among the following:

- City of Pekin Fire Department
- Pekin Police Foundation
- 911
- GUMC Operating Fund

January Birthdays

Aidan Sandoval	2	Ken Johnson	23
Haley McClain	4	Brian Behrends	25
Toni Evans	5	Winnette Klopfenstein	25
Maggie Miller	5	Peggy Russell	25
James Rimington	6	Melissa Berkley	25
Jo Trombini	7	Deven Ries	26
Chris Poole	9	Beverly Potts	27
Jim McKenzie	9	Lois Shields	28
Janine Culp	9	George Melloy	28
Fran Stroemer	10	Mark DeSchepper	29
Rachel Gianessi	11	Grant Golden	30
Jeff Marsden	11	Dawn Miller	31
Sandy Graber	14		
Cindy Bergstrand	16		
Jeremy McCreary	18		
Alex Hannan	18		
Ed Graber	19		
Lynne Johnson	20		
Cindy Fitzanko	20		
Reverend Stan Haxton	21		
Jim Stranz	21		
Arlen Booth	22		



Connect!

601 N. 4th St.
Pekin, IL
309-347-7131
secretary@pekingrace.org
pekingrace.org

Worship Times
Saturdays 5:30 pm
Sundays 9 & 11am

Office Hours
M-TH 8:30 am - 4:30 pm
Closed 12-1 pm

Prayer Concerns

Ann Vogt

Duane Hill

Gaylord Buss

June Parr

Mandi S.

Marnie Golden

*For Nancy Ridgeway and her family on
the passing of her mother*

Shannon Sandoval

Tammy Buss

Vicki Garman

*Names are kept on the prayer list for four
weeks. If you would like to be kept on longer,
please call the office, 309-347-7131.*

January 1 and January 2

Office will be closed.

January 3-January 5

Winter Extreme Trip:

January 5

Union Mission begins Sunday afternoon games weekly through
February 23.

January 7

District 108 resumes classes

Men's Group resumes meeting.

Union Mission starts using the gym for their basketball pro-
gram. Games will be on Sundays.

Week of January 6

Unitekids and Bible Buddies Resume

January 8

Sanctuary Choir and Hot Topics (Upper Room) Resume

January 12

UniteYouth Resumes

January 14

Book Club, Pekin Estates, 10:00 a.m.

January 19

Cut off to order tickets for the Nelson's Chicken Dinner

Fundraiser for Youth

January 20

Office is closed. Martin Luther King Jr. Day

January 21

Grace Notes Articles are due

January 30

Nelson's Chicken Dinner, Hospitality area, Pick-up 4-5:30 p.m.